

MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Annual Convention

November 2008

Resolution 08-06

MOU WITH REGIONAL and/or STATE USFWS OFFICES

WHEREAS, land management approaches used on the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (CMR) directly impact adjacent private lands, including:

- Wildlife managed on the CMR consistently travel outside the refuge onto private land, creating environmental and economic impacts such as the spread of disease and noxious weeds
- Availability of livestock grazing on the refuge greatly influences private land use, conservation practices, and the local economies surrounding the CMR
- Weed infestations originating on the refuge are spread to and have negative impacts on the surrounding private lands;

WHEREAS, the final CMR management decisions are made by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff in Denver, CO who are not directly impacted by those management decisions, but private landowners surrounding the CMR are directly impacted by the decisions;

WHEREAS, Conservation Districts represent private landowners' natural resource concerns;

WHEREAS, a Memorandum of Understanding exists between the National Association of Conservation Districts and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stating that both parties will cooperate on natural resource management issues;

WHEREAS, Executive Order 7509, dated December 11, 1936 established the Refuge "for the conservation and development of natural wildlife resources and for the protection and improvement of public grazing lands and natural forage resources..."

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Montana Association of Conservation Districts write and execute an MOU with the appropriate regional and/or state USFWS office to establish a framework for Conservation Districts to work with local USFWS offices in Montana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MACD pursue and support state legislation and Congressional action urging the USFWS to manage the CMR in a manner that identifies and addresses local needs, follows the enabling legislation that established the refuge, and dovetails with the local CD's conservation work.

Submitted by Garfield Conservation District
Recommend Do Pass - District Operations
Approved at General Session